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Housing Committee March 10, 2022 Public Hearing

Testimony in Support of HB 5204 An Act Concerning a Needs Assessment and Fair Share Plans for Municipalities to Increase Affordable Housing

Submitted by:

Gina Calabro, Executive Director/CEO, AIA Connecticut
370 James Street, New Haven, CT 06513

Dear Representative Williams, Senator Lopes, Representative Smith, Senator Anwar, Representative Polletta, Senator Cicarella and Members of the Housing Committee:

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a professional association of over 1,500 members, wishes to express our support of H.B. 5204.

In 2017, the American Institute of Architects declared through a resolution that access to housing is a "fundamental right." In doing so, we recognize the importance of addressing the housing crisis and its impacts on social equity as one of the most difficult challenges facing America's policymakers and shapers of the built environment.

The lack of affordable and safe housing results in many workers not having access to job markets within their own communities, lower income households are being forced to locate farther from places of employment and thereby encouraging blight, urban sprawl, and traffic congestion.

Architects are at the forefront of the challenges inherent to providing safe, healthy and sustainable housing to all. The AIA advocates for governmental policies, programs, and incentives to promote the design, construction, renovation, rehabilitation, preservation and stabilization of safe, healthy, affordable, sustainable and disaster resistant housing within the means of all people.

More than 137,000 people in CT are struggling to secure a safe, affordable home in a thriving, supportive community. Thousands of families simply want to live in a neighborhood full of opportunities that help their children thrive.

With the widening and deepening affordable housing crisis, we need to build equitable housing and integrate communities. We support policies that promote prosperous, healthy and livable communities—places where housing, retail, schools, and employment are accessible to all.

As such, the Connecticut Chapter of the American Institute of Architects requests the committees support for H.B. 5204.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony. Thank you for your consideration.